



Topeka Youth Orchestras Handbook

Congratulations on being a part of the Topeka Youth Orchestras. So many great young musicians have been a part of this group, and every one of our musicians contribute to the amazing legacy of this great organization. This handbook has been created to help provide you and your family with answers to questions you might have as well as outline the expectations of being a member of the youth orchestras.

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The Topeka Youth Orchestras History

The Youth Symphony was formed in 1957. The goal was to provide educational and performance opportunities for youth in Topeka and Northeast Kansas and to encourage talented young musicians to pursue their musical interests. Since then, the group has grown and changed to meet the demands and needs of the community.

Mission

The Topeka Youth Orchestras (TYO) provide opportunities for instrumental music education, inspiration, and enrichment to young musicians and our community through rehearsals and performances.

Guiding Values

Education: TYO supplements existing musical education available in public schools and from private music teachers. Activities focus on developing students' musical skills leading to high level public performances.

Inspiration: Students are inspired by their TYO experience to achieve enhanced personal development including self-esteem, confidence, and leadership. TYO are comprised of a diverse group of students from various levels and backgrounds to promote teamwork and excellence. Students gain individual growth not just as musicians but also as community members.

Enrichment: Key objectives are to enrich students, families, and the community and to develop a lifelong love of music. As a part of the Topeka Symphony the TYO benefits from the association with the Topeka Symphony and Friends of the Topeka Symphony.

General Concert Information

General admission tickets for TYO concerts will be sold online, through the Topeka Symphony office, and at the door before each concert. Ticket prices are \$10 for adults (26+) and \$5 for youth (0-25) not including sales tax. Ticket sales revenue supports the TYO and provides scholarships for TYO musicians.

All dress rehearsals are closed. The concert hall will open for seating 20-30 minutes before the concert. We ask that your party arrives early so we can be respectful when saving seats.

Auditions

The audition music is available on the Topeka Symphony website (topekasympphony.org).

If you were in a youth orchestra for the prior year, you only need to audition if you want to move up to the next group or if you are new.

Every audition will be viewed by at least two of the three TYO conductors and one community member. If a child is sick or unable to attend on the audition date, the child may record their audition and send the file to the TSO office for review.

The audition rubrics are provided to the TSO office which will contact parents/guardians with the results of the auditions.

Seating for Chamber and Symphonette is at discretion of the conductor. Youth Symphony will have seating auditions.

Rehearsal & Concert Schedule

Concert Attire

- Concert attire is black only. Please do not wear any other colored clothing during concerts.
- Attire options include solid black, full-length slacks, long-sleeved black button-down shirt, long-sleeved black dressy shirt with collarbone neckline, black tie (optional), ankle-length solid black skirt, black dress socks, tights and black dress shoes.

Rehearsals

- Rehearsals are most Tuesdays at Washburn University.
- Rehearsal spaces are regularly White Concert Hall stage for Youth Symphony and Symphonette, and Hurd Recital Hall for Chamber Orchestra. Occasionally, rehearsals move to the band room for one or multiple groups.
- Rehearsal times
 - Symphonette - 6:00 – 7:00 PM
 - Chamber – 6:00 – 7:30 PM
 - Youth Symphony 7:00 – 9:00 PM
- If your child is unable to attend rehearsal, please notify your conductor via email. Please see the Attendance and Punctuality section for expectations. If you have questions for your conductor, please reach out to your conductor.

Concerts

- There is a Fall Concert and a Spring Concert. Both are at 3:00 PM on Sundays on the White Concert Hall stage.
- Dress rehearsals are staggered beginning at 12:30 PM. The specific time is communicated closer to the concert.

- For the Spring concert, there are pictures beginning around 11:30 AM. The specific time is communicated closer to the concert.

Attendance & Punctuality

Musicians are expected to bring their music and a pencil, arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of rehearsal, and be in their seats 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of rehearsal. They should be warmed up and ready to play at the scheduled start time. Parents and guardians are welcome to watch rehearsals. If they choose not to watch rehearsals, they should be punctual in picking up their students after rehearsals.

It is vital to understand that orchestra members are making a commitment to the group for the entire season. Attendance at ALL rehearsals and concerts is very important, so the orchestra can work together to strive for the best sound. Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal. If a member must be absent, your conductor must be notified as far in advance as possible. Your conductor will decide if the absence will be excused (i.e., for illness, bad weather, school-related conflicts). To contact your conductor, please refer to the Contact Information at the end of the Handbook. After 3 absences, the musician's membership and participation in the orchestra will be re-evaluated.

Attendance at the dress rehearsal prior to the concert is mandatory. If a student misses dress rehearsal, they will not be allowed to perform at the concert.

Practice & Preparation

Members are expected to come to rehearsals prepared and with their music, a pencil, and instruments in order. The music played by the orchestras includes challenging pieces from the standard orchestral repertoire. Therefore, musicians should anticipate that it will be necessary to spend time outside of rehearsals practicing the music to be prepared for rehearsals and performances.

Inclement Weather

Every effort will be made to notify the news media (WIBW television), should inclement weather require cancellation of a TYO rehearsal or concert. Please check WIBW for an announcement. You will be notified via email by the office, but the office will not make individual phone calls announcing cancellations of rehearsals or concerts.

Care of Music

Music is provided to members for practice and study and must be returned in good condition after each concert. If an original part is damaged or not returned, the member will be charged for the replacement cost.

Small Ensemble Opportunities

Small groups of instrumentalists may be asked to represent the TYO and perform at various community functions. Performances will be scheduled at the discretion of the conductors and the Topeka Symphony office.

Topeka Symphony Orchestra Concerts

Musicians in the TYO receive free tickets to all TSO concerts. Parents and siblings attending with a TYO musician receive a 50% discount. Tickets can be reserved online or by calling the TSO office.

Elna Friedstrom Award

The Friends of the Topeka Symphony awards scholarships to TYO musicians. These awards honor the memory of Elna Friedstrom; a long-time volunteer and supporter of the TYOs. These awards are presented in the spring and are based on applications submitted by the students. Information regarding how to apply for the Elna Friedstrom award will be distributed during the spring semester.

Tuition and Tuition Scholarships

Tuition for the Youth Orchestras is due prior to the first rehearsal of the season. Tuition rates are \$125 for the year, or \$70 for each semester. Tuition scholarships may be available to musicians in the TYO on an as-needed basis. For more information regarding tuition assistance, please contact the TSO office.

The Topeka Symphony Board

Policies governing the activities of the TYO are established by the Board of Directors of the Topeka Symphony Society.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Nicolas Carr, *Youth Symphony Conductor*

Cell: 785-969-8280

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Ryan Masotto, *Chamber Orchestra Conductor*

Cell: 314-397-6717

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Carolyn Sandquist, *Symphonette Conductor*

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Topeka Symphony Office

Address: 2303 SW College Ave, Topeka, KS 66611

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Facebook pages:

[Topeka Symphony Orchestra](#)

Instagram:

[@topekasymphony](#)

Approved by the Topeka Symphony Society Board of Directors on March 10, 2026.